

# Study on the Problems and Countermeasures of Learning the National Common Language Among Young and Middle-aged Tibetan Farmers and Herdsmen in Sichuan

Xinchen Wu, Yu Yang, Hao Wang, <sup>Corresponding author</sup>

Sichuan University of Science & Engineering, Zigong, Sichuan 643000

---

**Abstract:** As a unified multi-ethnic country, the promotion of the national common language (hereinafter referred to as Mandarin) is a very important work. The popularization of Putonghua is conducive to promoting ethnic exchanges and integration, promoting the stable development of the country, casting a strong sense of community of the Chinese nation, and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In recent years, researchers have made a lot of achievements on the popularization of Putonghua in different regions, but there is a lack of research on the popularization of Putonghua in young and middle-aged Tibetan farmers and herdsmen in Sichuan. Through local field visits and research investigations, the author has mastered the popularization of Putonghua among young Tibetan farmers and herdsmen aged 30-50 with low education level in Sichuan, and has carried out in-depth thinking.

**Keywords:** Promoting Mandarin; Ethnic areas; Sichuan Tibetan; Young farmers and herdsmen

---

## Fund Project:

This paper is the initial achievement of the 2023 national Big Innovation project “Research on the Promotion of Putonghua in Tibetan Areas of Sichuan and the Awareness of the Chinese Nation Community” and the provincial-level first-class undergraduate course “Modern Chinese” of Sichuan Light Chemical Engineering University.

## 1. The importance of learning Mandarin for young and middle-aged Tibetan farmers and herdsmen in Sichuan

In 2021, The General Office of the State Council issued the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Language Work in the New Era (hereinafter referred to as the Opinions). The Opinions make it clear that by 2025, the popularization rate of Putonghua in the country will reach 85%, and the standardization, standardization and information level of the language will be further improved. According to the “Self-assessment Report on the Performance of Education Responsibilities of Sichuan Provincial People’s Government in 2021”, the popularity rate of Putonghua in the province reached 80.31%. From the data point of view, the popularization rate of Mandarin in Sichuan is expected to reach the national standard in 2025. However, from the Office of the People’s Government of Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture’s “Self-examination and Self-assessment of the Government’s Performance of Education Responsibilities in 2021”, it was learned that the Putonghua penetration rate of young and middle-aged farmers and herdsmen only reached 50%, far lower than the Putonghua penetration rate of the province. Therefore, the improvement of the Putonghua penetration rate of young and middle-aged Tibetan farmers and herdsmen in Sichuan plays a key role in achieving the Putonghua penetration rate in 2025 in Sichuan Province.

## 2. Investigation and analysis of the popularity rate of Putonghua in Tibet-related areas of Sichuan

Sichuan Tibetan areas are located in the western part of Sichuan Province, including Garze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Aba

Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture and Muli Tibetan Autonomous County (Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture), a total of 32 counties (cities), is the second largest Tibetan area in China, Sichuan Tibetan population after Tibet, is the second largest Tibetan area in China.

To understand the popularization of Putonghua in Tibet-related areas of Sichuan. By means of questionnaire survey, 150 people of different ages and occupations were randomly selected in Litang and Jinchuan as survey objects, and effective analysis was conducted on the use, acceptance and learning mode of Putonghua residents in the area. The following conclusions can be drawn:

2.1 65% of respondents can speak Mandarin.

2.2 When purchasing daily necessities or means of production, 67.8% of the respondents used Mandarin to communicate, 64.5% of the respondents used Mandarin when eating in restaurants (teahouses, cafes, etc.), and 64% of the public officials used Mandarin when handling business.

2.3 25.3% of the respondents could understand the news about agricultural product prices, weather and policies advertised in Putonghua on TV and radio, 15.3% could barely understand, 19.3% could not understand at all, and 40% could fully understand and relay them to others.

2.4 67.3% of the respondents would like to learn Mandarin very much, and 22.6% of the respondents think that they can learn Mandarin if they have the opportunity. The vast majority of respondents are willing to learn Mandarin.

2.5 Respondents are more likely to learn Mandarin by practicing conversations with others.

### **3. Analysis of the current situation of learning Mandarin in Tibetan-related areas of Sichuan**

3.1 Is greatly affected by the language environment. Local farmers and herdsmen communicate with others in Tibetan or ethnic dialects in daily life, and choosing to communicate in dialects has become their habit.

3.2 Difficulty in learning Mandarin. For the target group, their education level is low, difficult to learn; Less study time, difficult to master Mandarin.

3.3 Farmers and herdsmen have limited access to Han Chinese and less chance to use Mandarin.

### **4. Discussion on the standard of Mandarin mastery**

4.1 Sichuan Dialect has similarities with Putonghua. Putonghua takes Beijing pronunciation as the standard pronunciation, Uttar Pradesh dialect as the basic dialect, and typical vernacular works as the grammatical norm. The Uttar Pradesh dialect is spoken by about 73% of the Han population, and it is divided into four sub-dialects, Sichuan dialect is the southwest dialect under the Uttar Pradesh branch [Huang Borong, Liao Xudong, Modern Chinese, Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2017:4 pages.] To sum up, Sichuan dialect and Mandarin have a very high similarity, and the differences in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar are very small, and they can basically talk to each other.

4.2 Sichuan dialect plays an important role in Tibetan areas. From a practical point of view, Sichuanese is the second circulating language besides Tibetan in Tibetan areas of Sichuan, and most Tibetan people have mastered Sichuanese in addition to Tibetan.

4.3 Adjustment of Mandarin mastery standards. In order to adapt to the situation and complete the task of popularization in Tibetan areas of Sichuan, adjustments and concessions should be made in the standard of people in Tibetan areas of Sichuan mastering Mandarin: if they can master Sichuan dialect for daily communication, they can be recognized as mastering Mandarin.

### **5. Suggestions on Mandarin promotion strategies for young and middle-aged Tibetan farmers and herdsmen in Sichuan**

Through research and a series of promotion activities, we realized that the promotion of Putonghua in Tibet-related areas of Sichuan is far from enough, and to complete this arduous historical task requires the joint efforts of relevant national departments, local governments, the public, society and other parties to promote the popularization of Putonghua in Tibet-related areas of Sichuan.

5.1 Live selling can effectively increase the interest of young and middle-aged Tibetan farmers and herdsmen in learning Mandarin and increase their economic income. In 2023, the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council on Comprehensively Promoting the Key Work of Rural Revitalization in 2023 emphasized adhering to the road of urban-rural integrated development, strengthening scientific and technological innovation means, in-depth implementation of the “number of businesses to promote agriculture” and “Internet +” agricultural products out of the village project, encouraging agricultural products e-commerce direct procurement mode, and vigorously developing new forms of agricultural products e-commerce. According to the instructions of the national opinions, the measures of “promoting Mandarin + economic assistance to agriculture” can be

innovatively implemented in Tibet-related areas in Sichuan to promote the development of Tibet-related areas in Sichuan. Tibetan special agricultural products such as ghee, ginseng, cordyceps, yak beef and milk knot are favored by consumers. In their free time, young and middle-aged Tibetan farmers and herdsmen in Sichuan can seize the live broadcast dividend as a seller and broadcast, and promote local characteristic agricultural products to the majority of consumer groups through online live broadcast. In the process of live broadcasting, they are required to promote local agricultural products to consumers in Mandarin. Driven by interests, the enthusiasm of farmers and herdsmen to learn Mandarin will be greatly increased. Governments at all levels have seized the needs of farmers and herdsmen, and jointly set up agricultural assistance groups to teach them how to use Mandarin to promote agricultural products and communicate with consumers.

5.2 Through the establishment of wechat groups, use spare time for mutual learning. Led by the village cadres and college students, the establishment of mutual learning groups, village cadres and college students as responsible persons regularly share short videos of Mandarin learning, Mandarin learning Chinese-Tibetan combined version of text materials, etc., urging everyone to learn Mandarin on time and answer questions in a timely manner. Active learners will be rewarded to give full play to their role models and attract more people to learn Mandarin seriously.

5.3 Volunteers and social workers in western China led some farmers and herdsmen to integrate into the specific Putonghua exchange environment. During the investigation, we found that some farmers and herdsmen have difficulty in communicating with others in Mandarin to solve basic life problems. We can gather them together, help them integrate into their living environment, and realistically solve the problems faced by some young and middle-aged farmers and herdsmen. For example, volunteers and social workers in western China led them to buy daily necessities and go to the government hall to handle business. In this process, they are shown how to communicate in Mandarin, and then they do the actual communication operation, and continue to repeat this process, they can master the basic Mandarin and solve the problems of daily life.

5.4 Use Mandarin to extend the existing knowledge of ethnic minorities. Although in the Internet era, they can understand the knowledge, news, current affairs, national culture, etc., which they are interested in, it is difficult to deeply interpret the information due to the short video push mode, limited collection ability, limited knowledge ability level and other factors. We can use Mandarin to help them understand the content. Take current affairs as an example, first collect the current affairs that people are interested in, and make detailed explanation videos through the combination of Chinese and Tibetan subtitles, and guide them to correctly understand current affairs by explaining in Mandarin with Tibetan subtitles. Similarly, for other content they are interested in, we can also make use of this combination of Chinese and Tibetan methods for in-depth interpretation. Grasping the interest of the subjects and promoting Mandarin imperceptibly, this way is conducive to increasing their enthusiasm for learning Mandarin.

5.5 Popularization of Mandarin based on occupational needs. There are many important construction projects in Tibet-related areas of Sichuan. Taking Ganzi Prefecture and Aba Prefecture as an example, Ganzi Prefecture started 8 new projects such as Luhuo to Kangding Xindu Bridge Expressway in 2024, and continued to build 19 projects such as Kangding to Xindu Bridge expressway; In 2024, infrastructure projects, industrial projects, livelihood projects and social undertakings, ecological construction and environmental protection projects will be continued in a total of 46 sub-categories in four categories. However, most of the construction projects are the local project team to come to the local construction, the use of Mandarin and the basic communication with the project team is an important factor for local young and middle-aged people to get job opportunities. In view of the Mandarin required by these jobs, the government has set up special Mandarin courses to teach them to learn, with the aim of enabling them to have basic work communication language. Make use of job opportunities to encourage them to learn consciously and improve their consciousness and enthusiasm in learning Mandarin.

## References:

- [1] Wang Hao. Research on the promotion strategy of Putonghua in Sichuan Yi Area [J]. Chinese Language Construction,2016,(11):24.
- [2] Yuan Wei. The popularization and quality Improvement of Common Chinese language in the field of Chinese-style modernization [J]. Journal of Language Use,2023,(03):11-13.
- [3] Ye Yifan. Audience Analysis on the promotion and dissemination of Putonghua among adolescents in ethnic minority areas: A case study of adolescents in Aba Tibetan Area [J]. Theatre House,2020,(01):192-193.
- [4] Wang Hao. Putonghua Training Course in Sichuan Dialect Area [M]. Tianjin: Nankai University Press,2018.
- [5] Huang Borong, Liao Xudong. Modern Chinese [M]. Beijing: Higher Education Press,2017